ECLIPSE COMICS
ALIEN ENCOUNTERS
No. 2
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The Illustrated Science Fiction Magazine for Mature Readers

The PENUMBRA

ECLIPSE COMICS • P. O. BOX 199 • GUERNEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95446

ON THE RACKS

THE UNKNOWN WORLDS OF FRANK BRUNNER no. 1 & 2
Two issues collecting classic Brunner horror stories, now in color for the first time!

SIEGEL & SHUSTER: DATELINE 1930s no. 2
A fun-filled collection of strips by the creators of Superman, done in 1935 and never before published!

THE NEW DNAgents no. 1
A new price — only 75 cents! A new direction — what deep secret does the DNAgents' creator have? You'll never guess!

THE OFFICIAL TEEN TITANS INDEX no. 1
First of five issues telling you everything you ever wanted to know about The Teen Titans!

CROSSFIRE no. 14
The conclusion of the dynamite story started in DNAGENTS no. 24. Will Rainbow shed her clothes for Chic Saxon's new men's mag?!

KITZ 'N' KATZ no. 2
The wackiest cats in comics reach their second issue, written and drawn by Bob Laughlin! A book for the entire family!

MODESTY BLAISE no. 6
A thick 72-page squarebound volume printing "The Moon Man," "A Few Flowers for the Colonel," and "The Balloonatic." Great action!

MR. MONSTER no. 2
Back by popular demand, with a cover by Dave Stevens! Mr. Monster goes where no God-fearing man has gone before!

SABRE no. 14
Simon Shark, Heironymous Skull and Foxy Trot make their moves, while Sabre and Melissa try to lead a "normal" life!

THE MASKED MAN no. 5
Dash Hagen has the Masked Man and Barney captured and is taking them to Frankie's hideout! It's gang warfare, with Maggie as hostage

THE FOOZLE no. 3
The first appearance of The Foozle in color for the first time! "Slab" is the menace conjured up by Steve Englehart & Marshall Rogers!

THE ROPIN' FOOL

Every year for the past decade I have taken to the road in summer. I never tire of the highways, the blue skies and white clouds, the deserts of the West and the forests of the East. I guess I've written "Fit to Print" and "Notes from Surf City" and all the rest in more motels, hotels and roadside rest areas than I can remember. And in my heart every single one of those columns and articles filed from the road represents a dedication to the best road writer of all, Will Rogers.

The guy who is remembered today (when he is remembered at all) for saying he never met a man he didn't like was billed as "The Cowboy Philosopher" and once described himself as "the sorriest rope twirler that ever lived," but in actual fact he was the best trick roper of his era (and perhaps of all time) and was far from the semi-literate "Cowboy" he pretended to be. Rogers came from a well-to-do Oklahoma ranching family; his father, Clem Rogers, was on the committee that drafted the Oklahoma state constitution and had a county named after him. But Will, despite these advantages, left home in search of adventure.

He landed in South America, flat broke, got a job caring for a ship load of mules en route to South Africa, and through sheer blind luck ran into an American wild west show operator named Texas Jack who had need of a fancy trick roper. He joined the troupe as "The Cherokee Kid" and travelled with the rodeo act to New Zealand and Australia before he finally saved enough money to return home to Claremore, Oklahoma.

By then, however, he found life as a performer more appealing than life on a ranch, so he went East on the vaudeville circuit. He had a trained pony that he roped on stage, and he did a lot of twirling stunts that had never been seen before in New York City. He never spoke while on stage, until one day a fellow performer suggested he introduce his first stunt (in which he used two ropes, one in each hand, to catch both the pony and its rider at the same time) because it went by so fast the audience didn't understand how difficult a trick it was.

Once he started talking on stage, he found that East Coast audiences laughed at his accent and that he could use this to good advantage by making wry comments when a stunt went wrong or congratulating himself when one went well.

He was hired on for a permanent role in the Zeigfield Follies and Flo Zeigfield's Midnight Frolics. Since the Frolics audience consisted of nightly repeaters, Rogers soon learned to vary his comments, and it was during this period that he started cracking jokes about the day's headline news. "All I know is what I read in the papers" became his opening line, and he took to chewing gum onstage to reinforce his image as an ignorant cowpoke.

Political and social commentary became as much a part of Rogers' act as his rope tricks, and as long as he kept that winning smile on his homely face and that Oklahoma tang in his voice, he could get away with some pretty outrageous jabs at the government and big business. His self-proclaimed formula was to never attack the underdog, because it's funnier to see a big man fall than to see a little guy beat up.

[CONTINUED IN The Unknown Worlds of Frank Brunner No. 1]

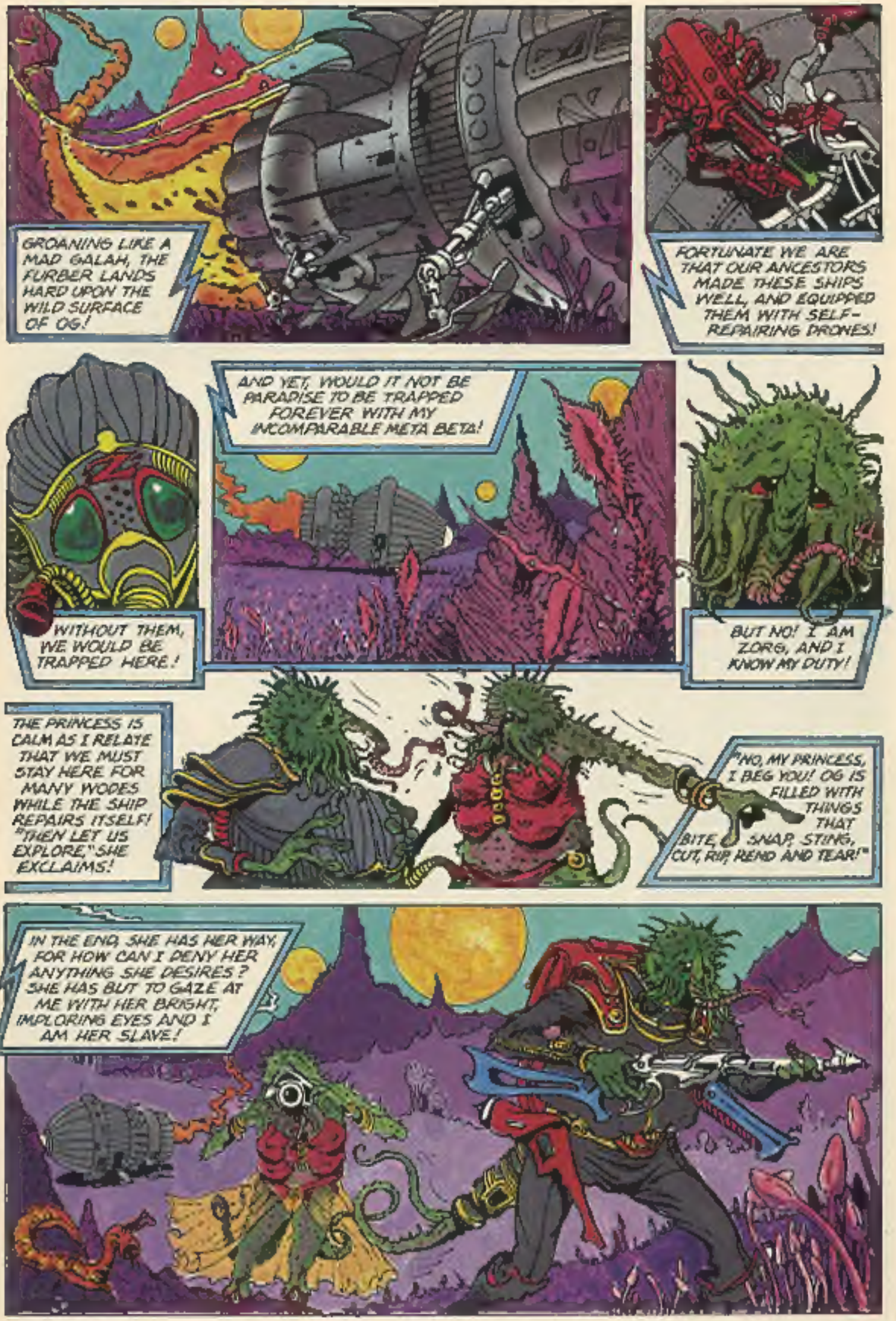
IN YOUR HANDS

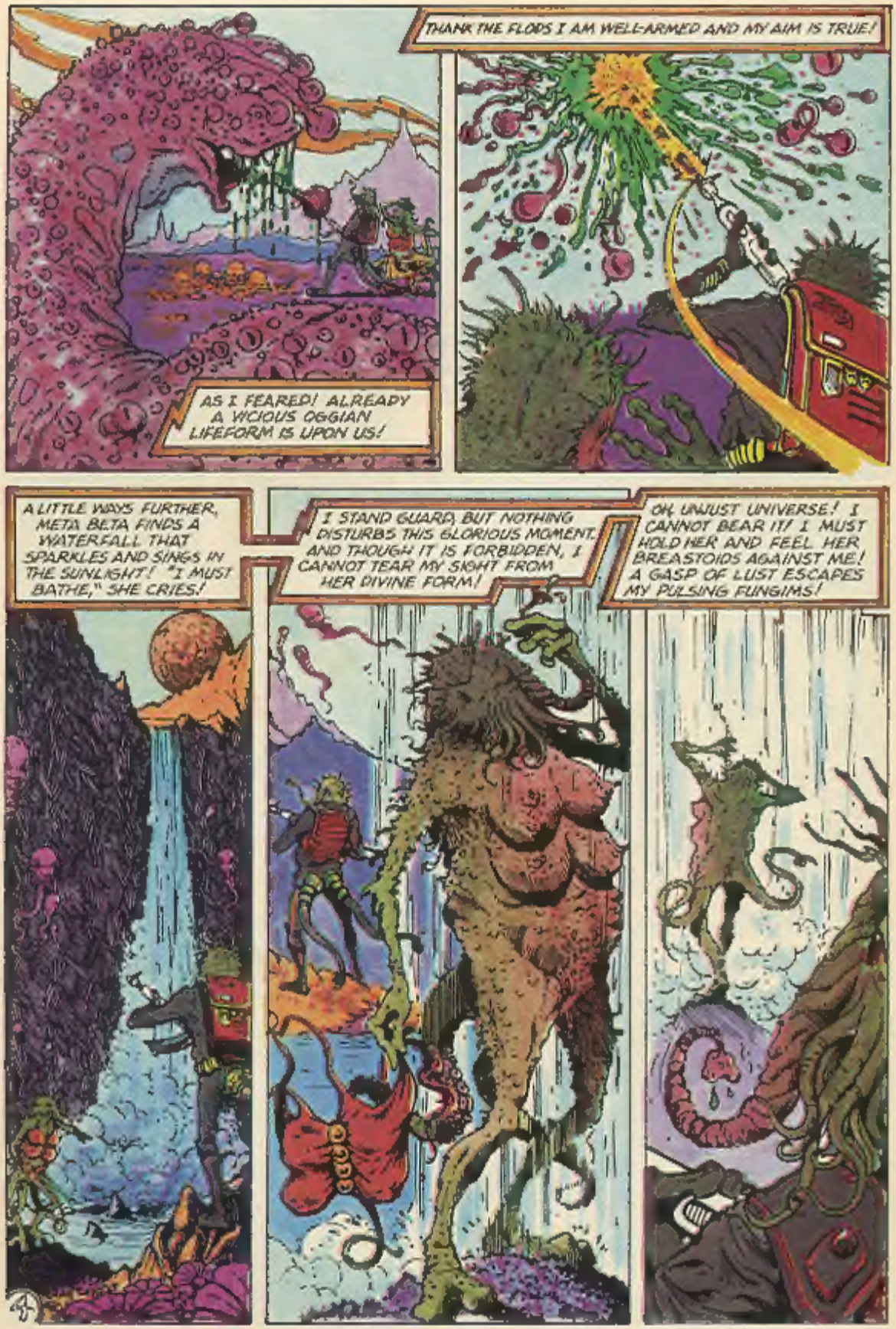
This issue we have a series of stories that truly live up to the title "Alien Encounters" — but in a couple of cases, you might have trouble figuring out who's the alien and who's not! Peter Ledger's cover painting illustrates "The Monster of Planet Og!" (written by Christy Marx), Kevin Farrell tells a tale of "The Resistance," "I Shot the Last Martian" is by Mark Borax and Chuck Beckum, and "Emergency Rations" is by Buzz Dixon, Nicholas Koenig and Willie Blyberg.

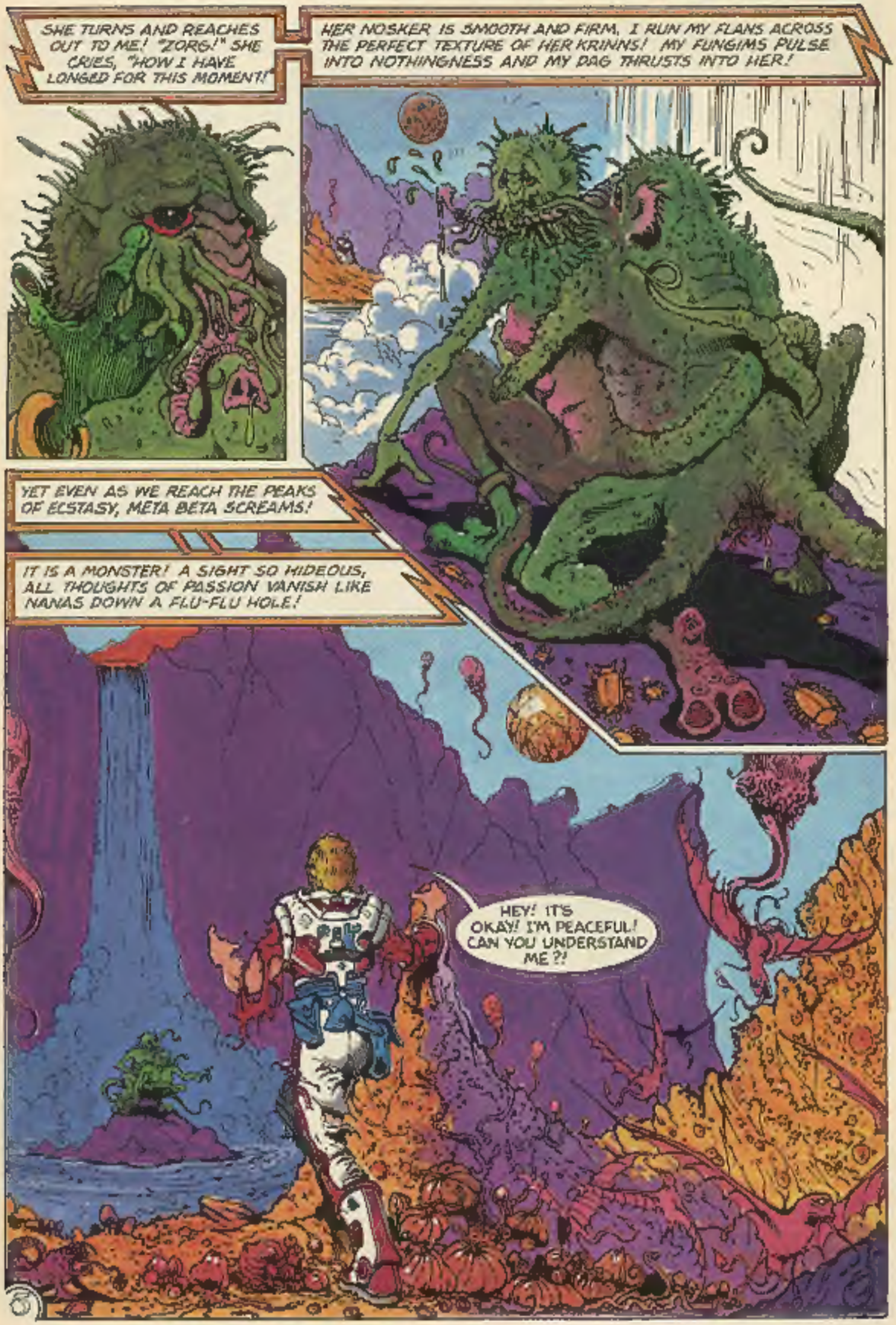
ALIEN ENCOUNTERS TM No. 2, August 1985. Published by Eclipse Comics, P.O.Box 199, Guerneville, CA 95446. Catherine Yronwode, Editor. Sean Deming, Assistant Editor. Dean Mullaney, Publisher. Cover art © 1985 Peter Ledger. 'The Monster of Planet Og' story © 1985 Christy Marx; art © 1985 Peter Ledger. 'The Resistance' ©1985 Kevin Farrell. 'I Shot the Last Martian' story © 1985 Mark Borax; art © 1985 Chuck Beckum. 'Emergency Rations' story © 1985 Buzz Dixon; art © 1985 Nicholas Koenig & Willie Blyberg. All other material © 1985 Eclipse Comics. Film by SM Graphics. Printed in Canada.

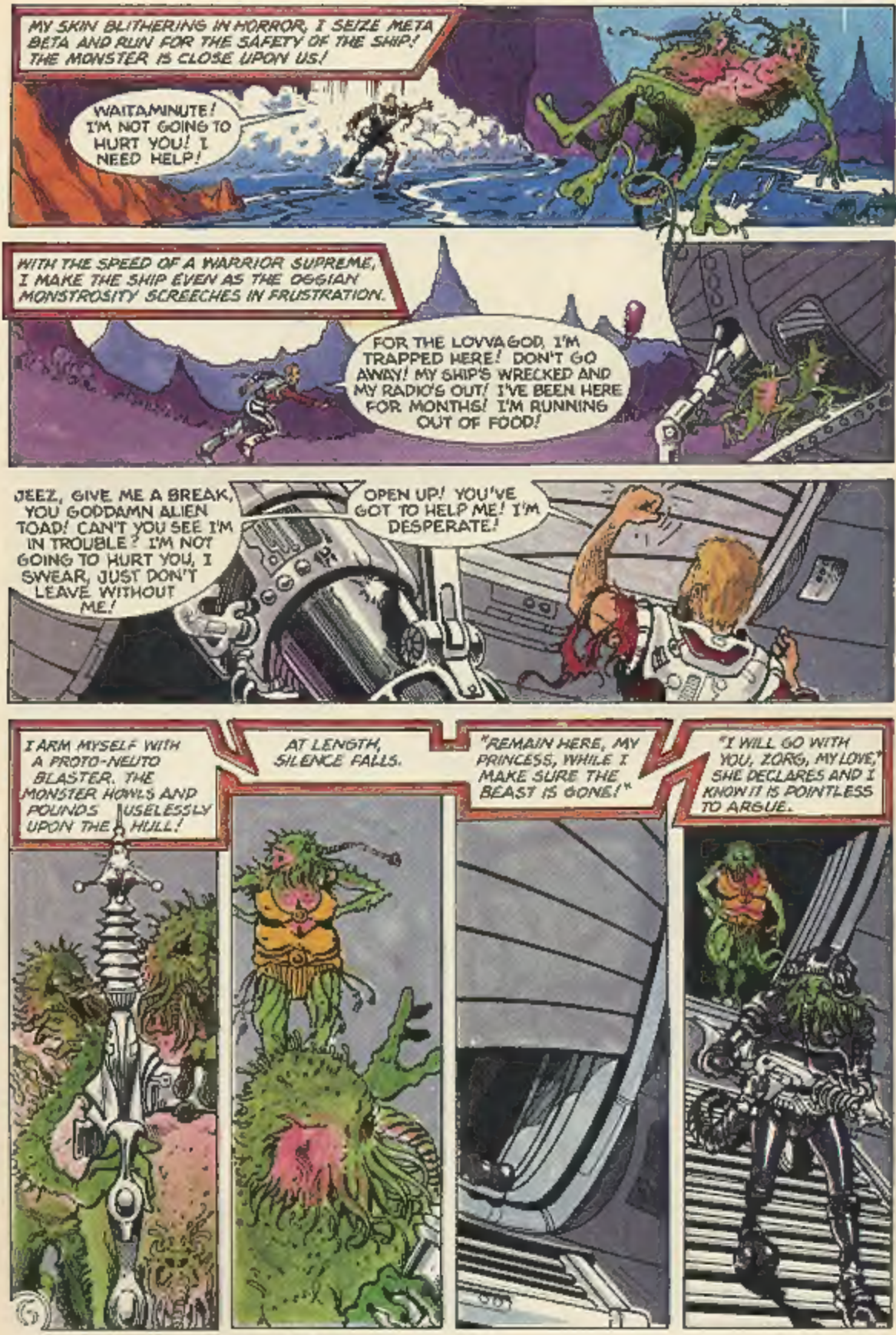
THE MONSTER OF
PLANET OG!
WRITTEN BY CHRISTY MARX ART BY PETER LEDGER LETTERING BY STAN SAKAI
SO JULES AWAY FROM THE DRONSG NEBULA, THE MIGHTY ENGINES OF MY CRUISER, THE GOOD SHIP FURBER, THRUM BENEATH MY POOVES.
AND I, ZORG, WARRIOR SUPREME OF THE LITHGO REALM, HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH THIS MOST CHERISHED OF MISSIONS--

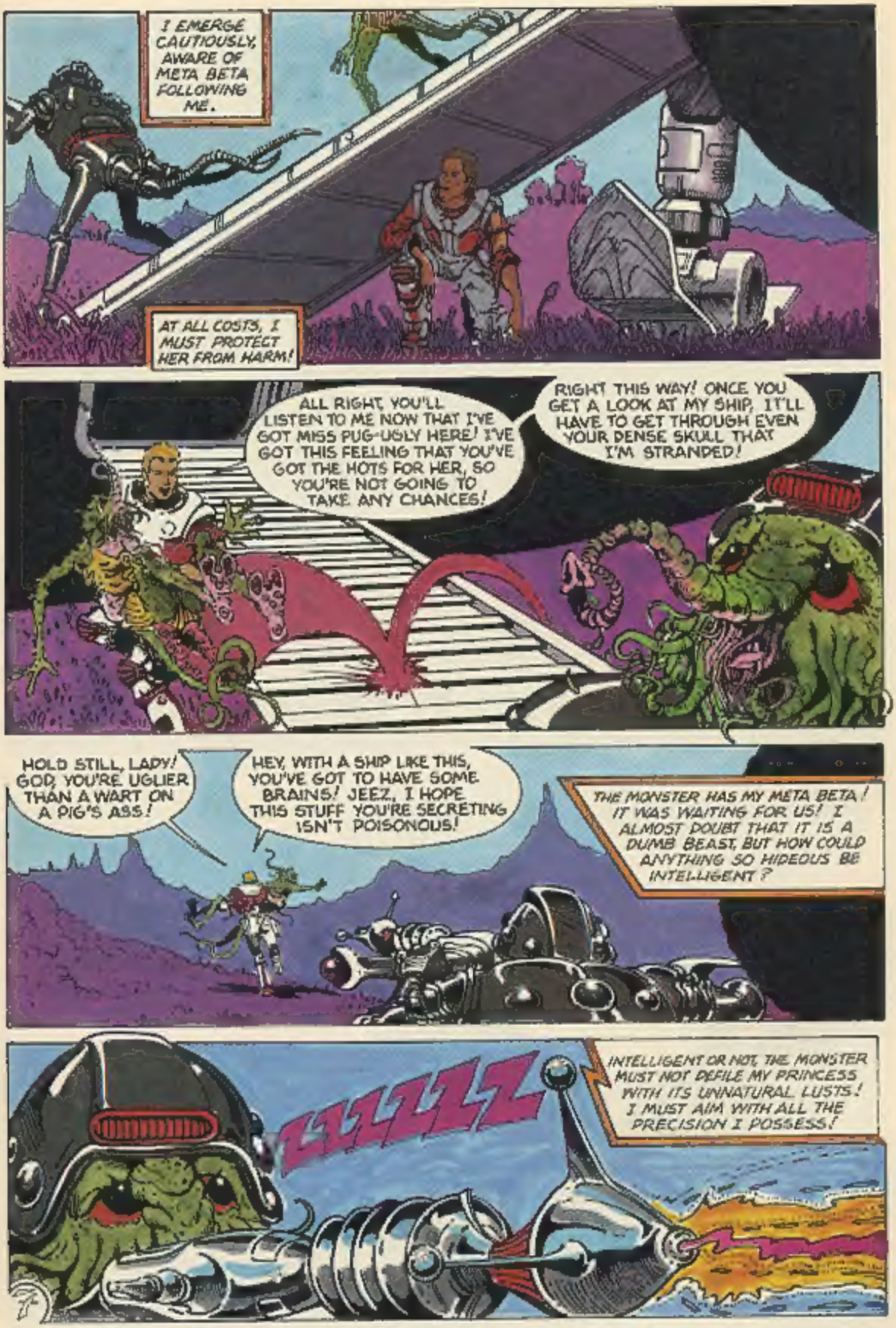
--TO CONVEY TO THE THRONEWORLD THE PRINCESS HERSELF, THE INCOMPARABLE META BETA!
HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE IS! IF ONLY I COULD TELL HER HOW THE VERY SIGHT OF HER MAKES MY THWIMBLIES WEAK WITH PASSION!
BUT ALAS! THOUGH I AM A WARRIOR SUPREME, I HAVE BUT ONE NAME AND CANNOT CLAIM HER AS MY LOVE!
ONLY AS A LORD OF THE REALM MIGHT I GAIN A SECOND NAME, AND THUS BE ABLE TO--
BY THE FLODS! AN ION STORM!
WE ARE SEVERELY DAMAGED! THE SHIP IS NO LONGER SPACE-SAFE! I DARE NOT ENDANGER THE PRINCESS BY GOING ON!
THE CHARTS INDICATE THAT THIS WORLD, THE PLANET OG, IS FULL OF DANGEROUS LIFEFORMS, BUT UNINHABITED BY CIVILIZED LIFE.
IT WILL HAVE TO DO!


GROANING LIKE A MAD GALAH, THE FURBER LANDS HARD UPON THE WILD SURFACE OF OG!
FORTUNATE WE ARE THAT OUR ANCESTORS MADE THESE SHIPS WELL, AND EQUIPPED THEM WITH SELF-REPAIRING DRONES!
AND YET, WOULD IT NOT BE PARADISE TO BE TRAPPED FOREVER WITH MY INCOMPARABLE META BETA!
WITHOUT THEM, WE WOULD BE TRAPPED HERE!
BUT NO! I AM ZORG, AND I KNOW MY DUTY!
THE PRINCESS IS CALM AS I RELATE THAT WE MUST STAY HERE FOR MANY MODES WHILE THE SHIP REPAIRS ITSELF! "THEN LET US EXPLORE," SHE EXCLAIMS!
"NO, MY PRINCESS, I BEG YOU! OG IS FILLED WITH THINGS THAT BITE, SNAP, STING, CUT, RIP, REND AND TEAR!"
IN THE END, SHE HAS HER WAY. FOR HOW CAN I DENY HER ANYTHING SHE DESIRES? SHE HAS BUT TO GAZE AT ME WITH HER BRIGHT, IMPLORING EYES AND I AM HER SLAVE!


AS I FEARED! ALREADY A VICIOUS OGGIAN LIFEFORM IS UPON US!
THANK THE FLODS I AM WELL-ARMED AND MY AIM IS TRUE!
A LITTLE WAYS FURTHER, META BETA FINDS A WATERFALL THAT SPARKLES AND SINGS IN THE SUNLIGHT! "I MUST BATHE," SHE CRIES!
I STAND GUARD, BUT NOTHING DISTURBS THIS GLORIOUS MOMENT. AND THOUGH IT IS FORBIDDEN, I CANNOT TEAR MY SIGHT FROM HER DIVINE FORM!
OH, UNJUST UNIVERSE! I CANNOT BEAR IT! I MUST HOLD HER AND FEEL HER BREASTOIDS AGAINST ME! A GASP OF LUST ESCAPES MY PULSING FUNGIMS!


SHE TURNS AND REACHES OUT TO ME! "ZORG!" SHE CRIES, "HOW I HAVE LONGED FOR THIS MOMENT!"
HER NOSKER IS SMOOTH AND FIRM. I RUN MY FLANS ACROSS THE PERFECT TEXTURE OF HER KRINNS! MY FUNGIMS PULSE INTO NOTHINGNESS AND MY DAG THRUSTS INTO HER!
YET EVEN AS WE REACH THE PEAKS OF ECSTASY, META BETA SCREAMS!
IT IS A MONSTER! A SIGHT SO HIDEOUS, ALL THOUGHTS OF PASSION VANISH LIKE NANAS DOWN A FLU-FLU HOLE!
HEY! IT'S OKAY! I'M PEACEFUL! CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ME?!


MY SKIN BLITHERING IN HORROR, I SEIZE META BETA AND RUN FOR THE SAFETY OF THE SHIP! THE MONSTER IS CLOSE UPON US!
WAITAMINUTE! I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU! I NEED HELP!
WITH THE SPEED OF A WARRIOR SUPREME, I MAKE THE SHIP EVEN AS THE OGGIAN MONSTROSITY SCREECHES IN FRUSTRATION.
FOR THE LOVVA GOD, I'M TRAPPED HERE! DON'T GO AWAY! MY SHIP'S WRECKED AND MY RADIO'S OUT! I'VE BEEN HERE FOR MONTHS! I'M RUNNING OUT OF FOOD!
JEEZ, GIVE ME A BREAK, YOU GODDAMN ALIEN TOAD! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M IN TROUBLE? I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU, I SWEAR, JUST DON'T LEAVE WITHOUT ME!
OPEN UP! YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME! I'M DESPERATE!
I ARM MYSELF WITH A PROTO-NEUTO BLASTER. THE MONSTER HOWLS AND POUNDS USELESSLY UPON THE HULL!
AT LENGTH, SILENCE FALLS.
"REMAIN HERE, MY PRINCESS, WHILE I MAKE SURE THE BEAST IS GONE!"
"I WILL GO WITH YOU, ZORG, MY LOVE," SHE DECLARES AND I KNOW IT IS POINTLESS TO ARGUE.


I EMERGE CAUTIOUSLY, AWARE OF META BETA FOLLOWING ME.
AT ALL COSTS, I MUST PROTECT HER FROM HARM!
ALL RIGHT, YOU'LL LISTEN TO ME NOW THAT I'VE GOT MISS PUG-UGLY HERE! I'VE GOT THIS FEELING THAT YOU'VE GOT THE HOTS FOR HER, SO YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY CHANCES!
RIGHT THIS WAY! ONCE YOU GET A LOOK AT MY SHIP, IT'LL HAVE TO GET THROUGH EVEN YOUR DENSE SKULL THAT I'M STRANDED!
HOLD STILL, LADY! GOD, YOU'RE UGLIER THAN A WART ON A PIG'S ASS!
HEY, WITH A SHIP LIKE THIS, YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE SOME BRAINS! JEEZ, I HOPE THIS STUFF YOU'RE SECRETING ISN'T POISONOUS!
THE MONSTER HAS MY META BETA! IT WAS WAITING FOR US! I ALMOST DOUBT THAT IT IS A DUMB BEAST, BUT HOW COULD ANYTHING SO HIDEOUS BE INTELLIGENT?
INTELLIGENT OR NOT, THE MONSTER MUST NOT DEFILE MY PRINCESS WITH ITS UNNATURAL LUSTS! I MUST AIM WITH ALL THE PRECISION I POSSESS!
ZZZZZ

DIE, MONSTER!
WHY ISN'T HE FOLLOWING? HE--HE WOULDN'T BE DUMB ENOUGH TO SHOOT, WOULD HE? OH, GOD, TELL ME HE WOU--
IT'S RED ICHOR SPURTS UPON THE ALIEN GRASS OF 06!
AND ALL IS WELL AGAIN! WE ENTWINE NOSKERS JOYOUSLY!
THE INCOMPARABLE META BETA IS MINE!

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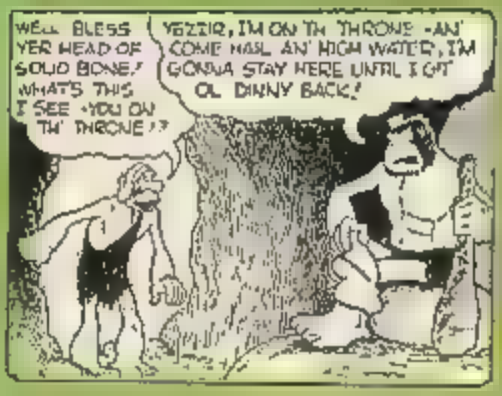
ECLIPSE COMICS

Abbie an' Slats

IT'S A SAFE ROD AND LOOK—IT'S FOR A NAME ON IT "PARSIONE REALTY COMPANY"
ABE REACT LUCKY NOBODY'S SEEN THIS—LET'S CARRY IT OVER TO MY PLACE, OPEN IT AN

When SLATS, a tough New York orphan, comes to the country to live with his cousin, ABBIE, he brings more action and excitement than Crabtree Corners has ever seen before. Also features Bathless Groggins, the tough yet quixotic old curmudgeon, and his niece, Becky. Scripts by Al Capp and Elliot Caplin Art by Raeburn Van Buren

ALLEY OOP


WELL BLESS YER HEAD OF SOLID BONE! WHAT'S THIS I SEE YOU ON TH' THRONE?
VEZZIR, I'M ON TH' THRONE -AN' COME HAIL AN' HIGH WATER, I'M GONNA STAY HERE UNTIL I GIT OL DINNY BACK!

ALLEY OOP leads a coup and becomes the new king of Moo to get back Dinny from the Grand Wizer. Then ALLEY and his girl Oola, get trapped inside the land of Sawella, where King Wurzel marry Oola, and marry ALLEY to his sister
Story and Art by V T Hamlin

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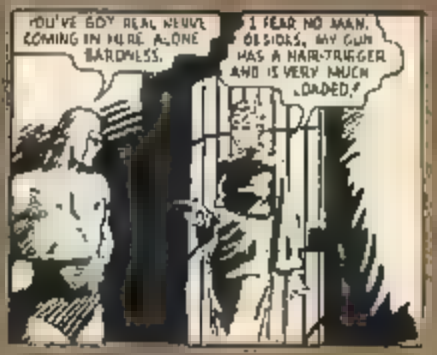
From out of the Old West comes Robin Hood type adventure with THE CISCO KID Watch as CISCO and his companion, Pancho, outwit and outfight injustice wherever it appears
Story by Rod Reed Art by José Luis Salinas

The PHANTOM



THE PHANTOM seeks to destroy a group of sky pirates but is first accused of aiding them and then is caught by their vicious whip-wielding leader Can even The Ghost Who Walks escape the clutches of the all female SKY BAND?
Story by Lee Falk Art by Ray Moore

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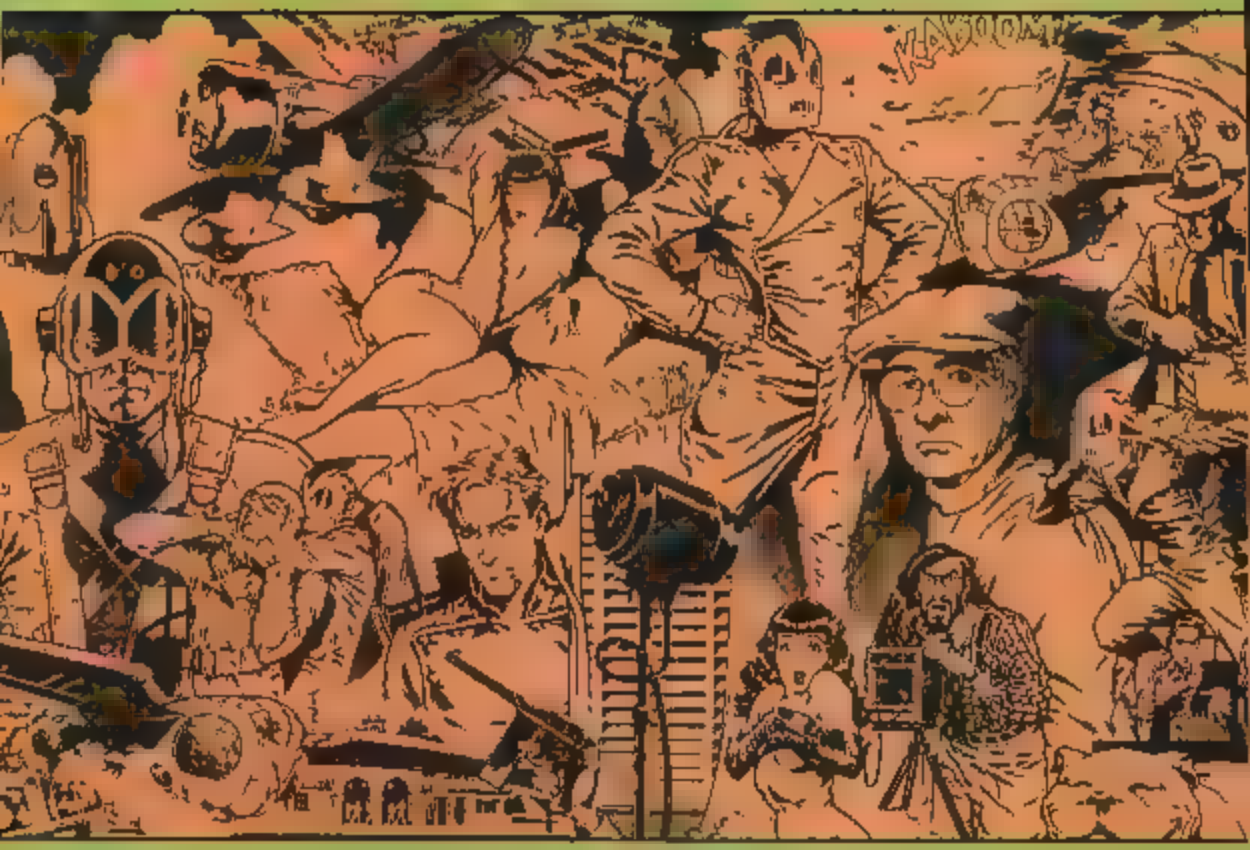
IN A STRANGE AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT, THE DENIZENS STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL AGAINST THE PERSISTENT SIEGES OF FEROCIOUS ENEMIES. THESE CREATURES KEEP CONSTANT VIGIL DESPITE IMMEASURABLE ODDS. HERE, ALL DO THEIR PART AS MEMBERS OF...
THE RESISTANCE
TURBULENCE!
IT'S A BREAK-IN FOLLOW ME!
WHAT'S CAUSING IT, SIR?
THIS IS IT-- IN THE NEXT TWO MINUTES, YOU'LL EITHER MAKE GRADE--OR DIE!
UH.. YES, SIR!
AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR- KEVIN FARRELL
LETTERS- TIM HARKINS

LISTEN, KID YOU NEED MORE THAN THE PAPER PUSHING SKILLS THEY TAUGHT YOU UP IN THE FRONT OFFICE TO STAY ALIVE DOWN HERE--
--SO STAY CLOSE TO ME AND USE YOUR INSTINCTS.
SIR--THAT LIGHT... S THAT THE IMPACT AREA?
YEAH THAT LIGHT COMES FROM ANOTHER WORLD
LET'S GET UP THE INVADERS WILL BE HERE ANY SECOND
INVADERS WITH MEAN APPETITES
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE THAT CURRENT IS STRONG ENOUGH TO PULL YOU RIGHT THROUGH THE BREAK!
HERE THEY COME!
THEY'RE AS TOUGH AS THEY ARE BIG, BUT THE CURRENT ALWAYS SLOWS THEM DOWN. WE'VE GOT THE ADVANTAGE OF SPEED-- AND WE'LL NEED IT!

YOU MEAN LIKE THIS?
NOT BAD, K. D..
WATCH YOUR TAIL FINS! SOMETHING ELSE COMING IN!
YEOW! IT FEELS LIKE
AN ACID BATH!
WAHOO! I'VE ONLY SEEN THAT HAPPEN A COUPLE A' TIMES BEFORE I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE STUFF IS, BUT IT TEARS THOSE BABIES UP EVERY TIME!
LOOK AT 'EM BEING SUCKED OUT! WAY TO GO!
WE WERE LUCKY, K D REAL LUCKY
HOW LONG BEFORE THE WALL IS REBUILT?

OUR BOYS WILL HAVE IT REPAIRED IN A COUPLE OF DAYS LETS GO FILE OUR REPORT!
WELCOME TO THE TEAM PARTNER
THAT WASN'T ALL THAT BAD NOW, WAS IT?
THE PEROXIDE WILL HELP YOUR BODY STOP ANY INFECTION!
WE CAN'T LET A FEW NASTY GERMS STOP YOU FROM RIDING YOUR NEW BIKE CAN WE?



The ROCKETEER™

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COMICS & SEQUENTIAL ART

By Will Eisner

© 1985 Will Eisner

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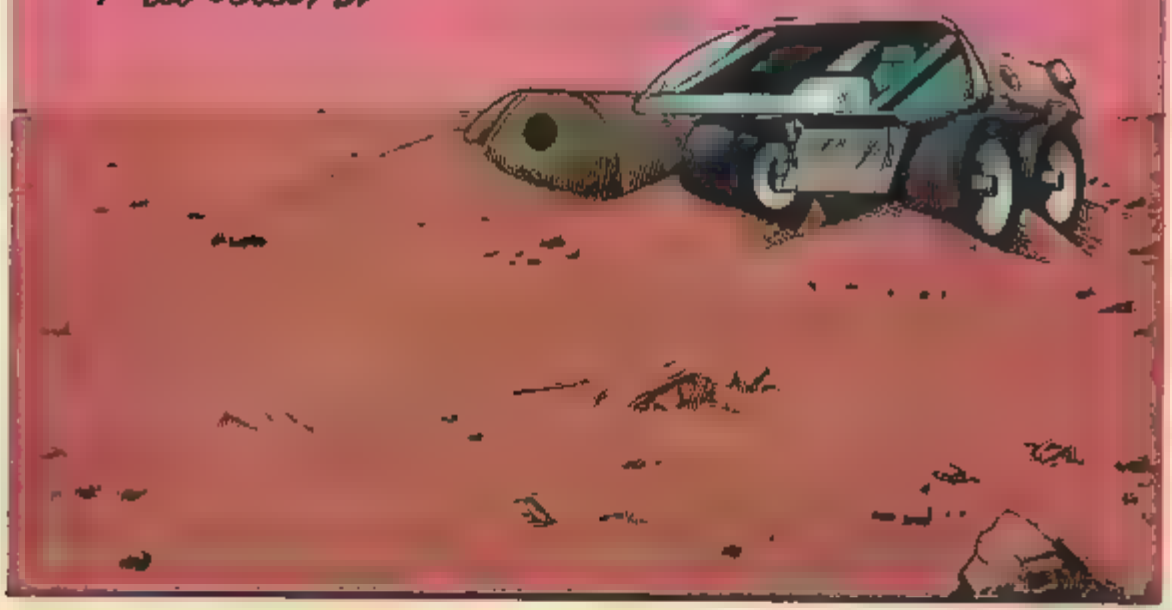
May 20--
I've never been much of a writer. But Houston asked me to keep this Goddam journal for the record...

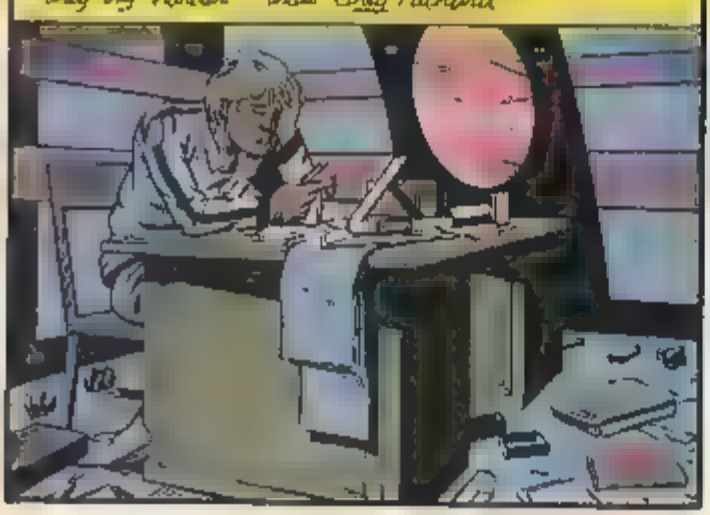
Well, this isn't for the record anymore-- it's for Greg, though the odds he'll find it now are the same as finding a snowball in Hell.

and we never did find any snowballs on this on this God forsaken desert world...

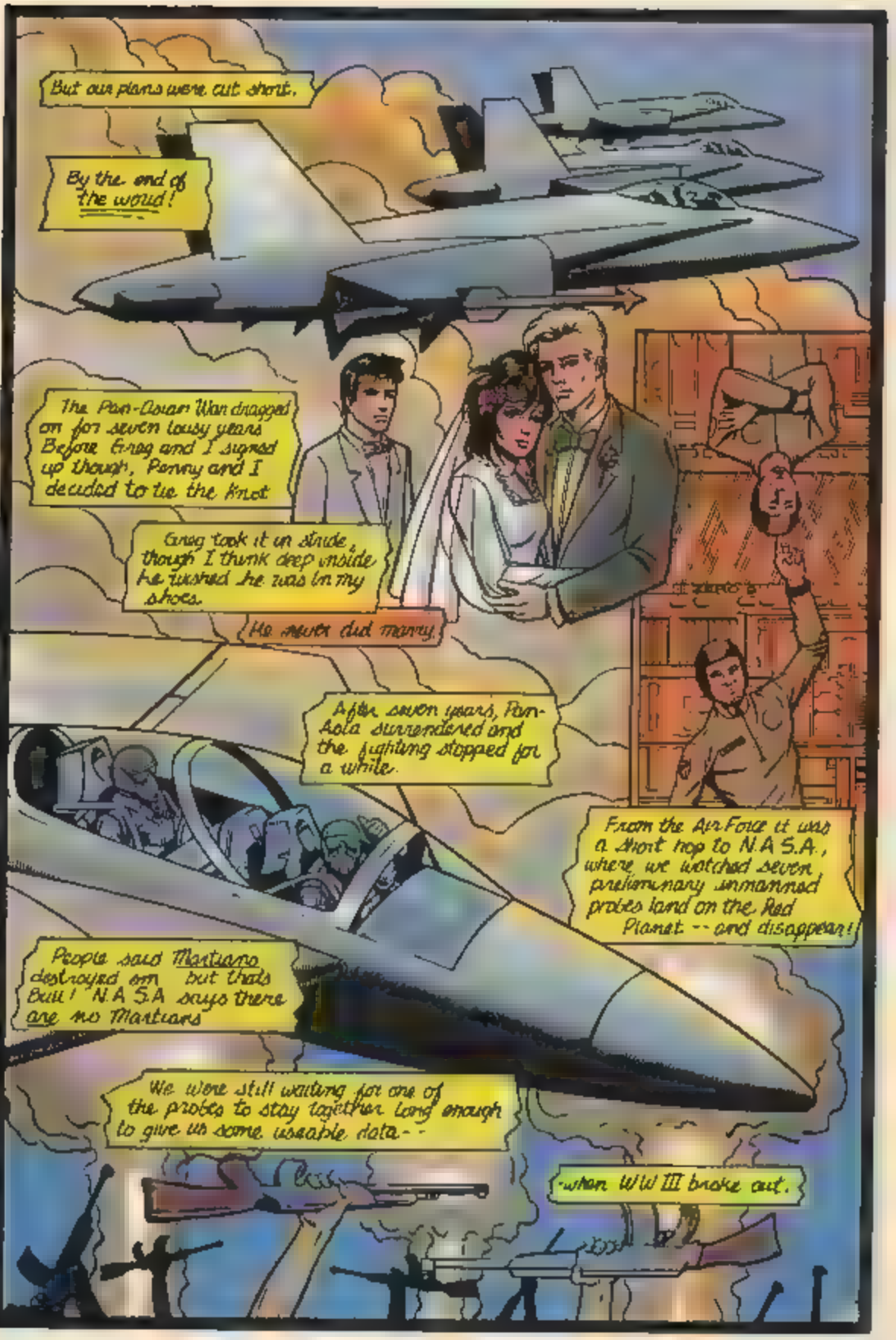
I Shot the Last Martian.



Some guys come into the world a second too late -- and remain a fraction off-step all their lives -- so they try harder. That's Greg Packard.



Even back in Waukegan, Greg had to work harder to pay his dues...
THERE'S PENNY THE NEW GIRL I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT.
LAST ONE TO THE PORCH BUYS US ALL SUNDAES!
10
MATT SIMMS - PUFF PUFF! PENNY LAYTON. PENNY PUFF PUFF! THIS IS MY BEST FRIEND, MATT.
C'MON PENNY- GREG'S TREATIN US TO ICE CREAM.
RIGHT OL' BUDDY?
Five years later we were still best friends
I was still out front grabbing the glory
3
and Greg was behind the lines doing the work.
In the most kids in 1990, our sights were on college.


But our plans were cut short.
By the end of the world!
The Pan-Asian War dragged on for seven lousy years. Before Greg and I signed up though, Penny and I decided to tie the knot.
Greg took it in stride, though I think deep inside he wished he was in my shoes.
He never did marry.
After seven years, Pan-Asia surrendered and the fighting stopped for a while.
From the Air Force it was a short hop to N.A.S.A., where we watched seven preliminary unmanned probes land on the Red Planet -- and disappear!
People said Martians destroyed em but that's BULL! N.A.S.A. says there are no Martians
We were still waiting for one of the probes to stay together long enough to give us some useable data--
-when W.W III broke out.

That's why I bit my tongue when Major General Sam Franklin called me to the Pentagon six months ago.

MATT--WE'RE PUSHING THE ARIES II BLASTOFF UP TO MARCH FIFTEEN.

BUT GENERAL--THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! WE DON'T HAVE THE LIFE FORM DATA AND GREG AND I HAVEN'T EVEN PICKED A THIRD CREW MEMBER YET!

YOU HAVE NOW COLONEL. LT. BONNIE FRANKLIN.

YOUR DAUGHTER?

BUT SHE'S JUST A--A ROOKIE!

SHE'S ALSO THE ONLY FEMALE ASTRONAUT QUALIFIED FOR ARIES II MATT. MUST I SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU?

THIS WAR COULD GO NUCLEAR ANY MOMENT. MARS JUST MIGHT BE OUR LAST CHANCE

AND WITH A WOMAN ALONG FOR WARREMPH'S WELL...THE JOINT CHIEFS FEEL Y.A. SHOULD GET OFF THE GROUND A.S.A.P.

I couldn't argue, of course couldn't tell him the dangers of sending a rookie like Bonnie into deep space.

But Aries II had no rearview mirrors--We can only go blindly forward in the dark now hoping

In Forty years Greg and I had never fought, but this weird beaten planet did something strange to us when we landed today.

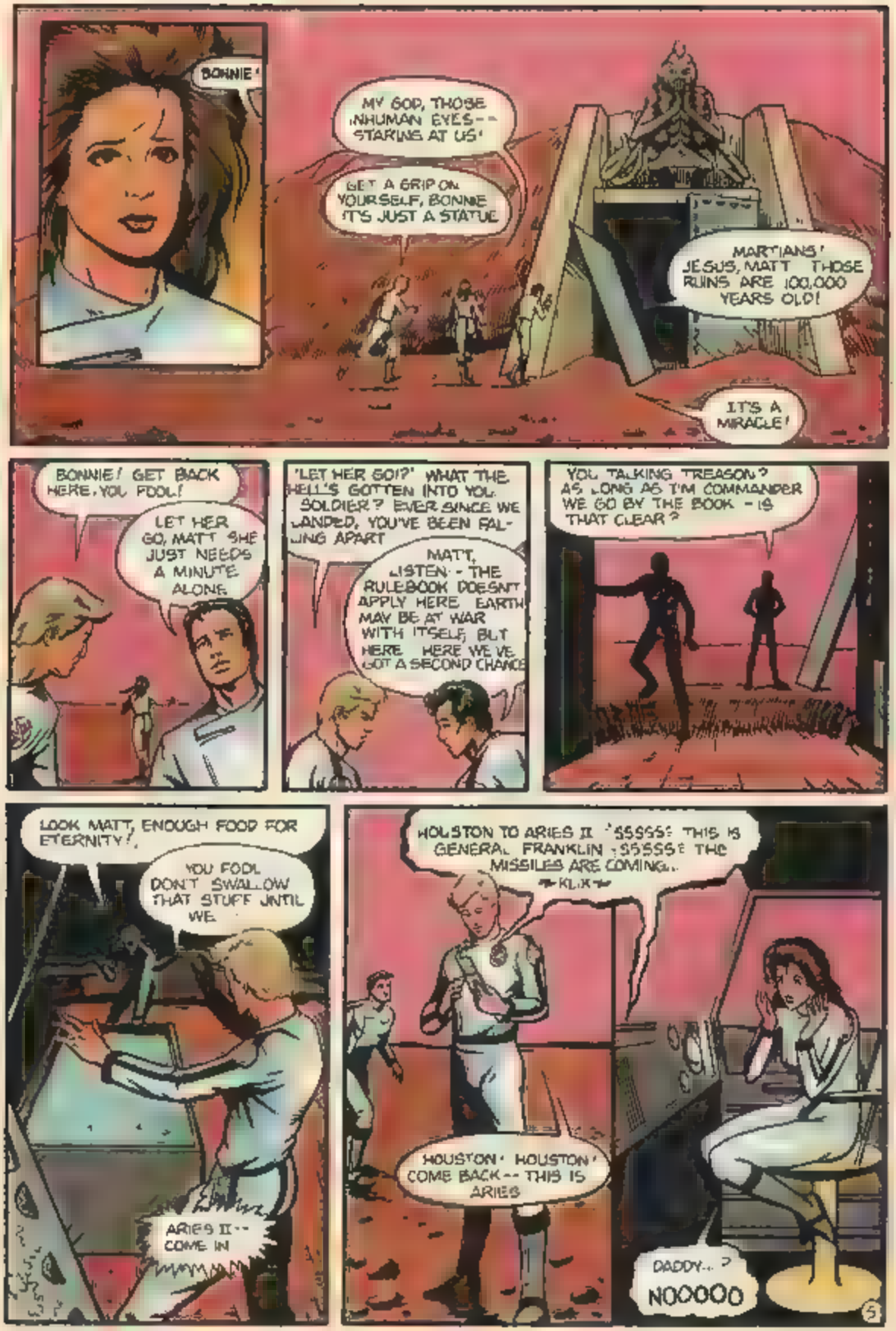
I DUNNO, MATT--FEELS KINDA LIKE TRESPASSING. LIKE MAYBE THE MARTIANS DON'T WANT US HERE.

DON'T TALK NONSENSE. YOU KNOW THERE ARE NO MARTIANS.

THEN MAYBE THE PLANET ITSELF DOESN'T WANT US MATT, WHAT BECAME OF THE FIRST TWO PROBES?

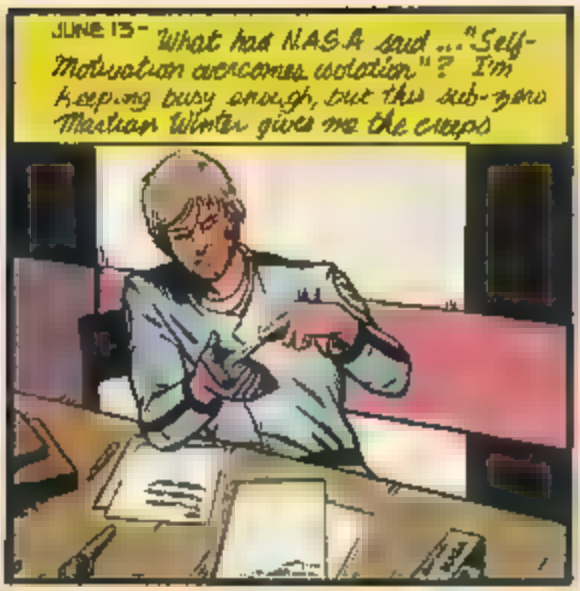
THEY MALFUNCTIONED. THAT'S ALL. MARS ISN'T OUT TO GET US AND THERE ARE NO..

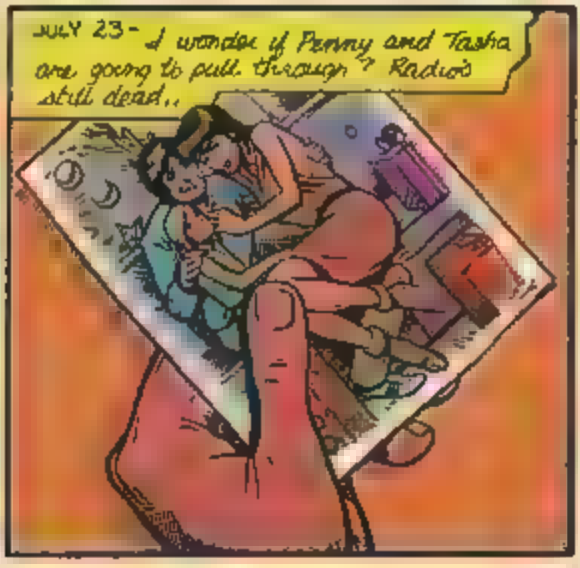
SIMMS! PACKARD! GET THE HELL OVER HERE FAST! I'VE FOUND THE MARTIANS!

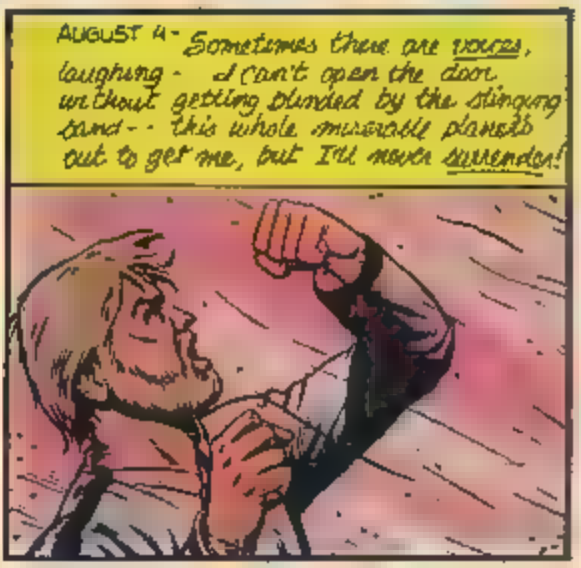

BONNIE!
MY GOD, THOSE INHUMAN EYES-- STARING AT US!
GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, BONNIE IT'S JUST A STATUE
MARTIANS! JESUS, MATT THOSE RUINS ARE 100,000 YEARS OLD!
IT'S A MIRACLE!
BONNIE! GET BACK HERE, YOU FOOL!
LET HER GO, MATT SHE JUST NEEDS A MINUTE ALONE
'LET HER GO!?' WHAT THE HELL'S GOTTEN INTO YOU, SOLDIER? EVER SINCE WE LANDED, YOU'VE BEEN FALLING APART
MATT, LISTEN - THE RULEBOOK DOESN'T APPLY HERE EARTH MAY BE AT WAR WITH ITSELF, BUT HERE HERE WE'VE GOT A SECOND CHANCE
YOU TALKING TREASON? AS LONG AS I'M COMMANDER WE GO BY THE BOOK - IS THAT CLEAR?
LOOK MATT, ENOUGH FOOD FOR ETERNITY!
YOU FOOL DON'T SWALLOW THAT STUFF UNTIL WE
ARIES II -- COME IN
HOUSTON TO ARIES II -SSSSS- THIS IS GENERAL FRANKLIN -SSSSS- THE MISSILES ARE COMING...
-KLIK-
HOUSTON! HOUSTON! COME BACK -- THIS IS ARIES
DADDY...?
NOOOOO
5

BONNIE! BONNIE! JEEZ, MATT, SHE'S GOING!
WHAT'S SHE OH NO! THE ROCKET
SHE'S GONE BACK!
THAT BLASTED ROOKIE'S LEAVING US STRANDED
HA HA HA!
AND YOU-- YOU'RE JUST AS CRAZY AS SHE IS!
NOW WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
WHAT I SHOULDA DONE YEARS AGO, MATT-- CHUCKIN' THE RULES AND REGULATIONS AND STARTING OVER
YOU WON'T LAST A WEEK! THIS IS DESERTION! PUT THOSE COLORS BACK ON OR I'LL HAVE TO SHOOT YOU
WILLYA MATT? I WONDER
COME BACK...
I Still can't figure it .. all along he'd made the grade, but in one lousy moment he snapped.
I could only come back here and wait for Greg to come to his senses- wait for Earth to send a rescue ship... if Earth's still there ...
6

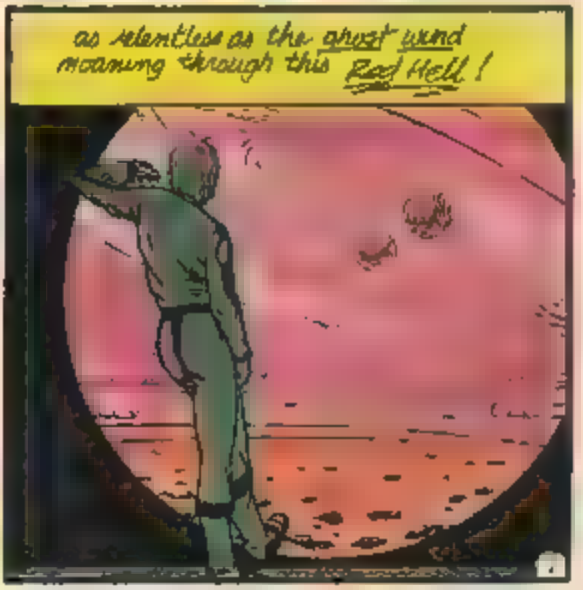
MAY 25 - I have enough supplies for about six months if I can keep from going stir crazy.

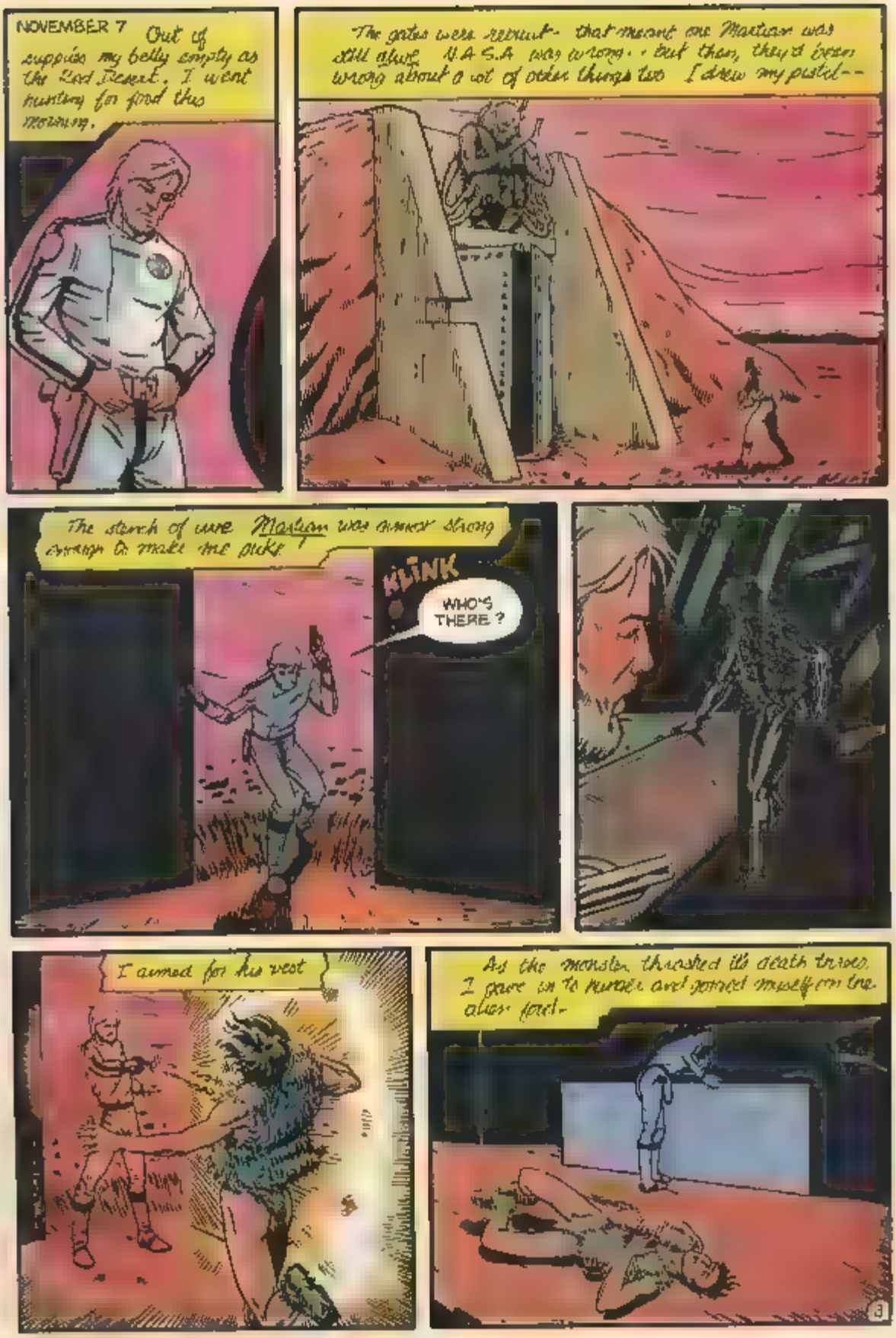

JUNE 13 - What had NASA said ... "Self-Motivation overcomes isolation"? I'm keeping busy enough, but this sub-zero Martian Winter gives me the creeps


JULY 23 - I wonder if Penny and Tasha are going to pull through? Radio's still dead..


AUGUST 4 - Sometimes these are voices, laughing - I can't open the door without getting blinded by the stinging sand - - this whole miserable planet's out to get me, but I'll never surrender!

SEPTEMBER 1 - Can a planet have a soul?
If Mars has one, it's an ancient, malicious soul...


as relentless as the ghost wind moaning through this Red Hell!


NOVEMBER 7 Out of supplies my belly empty as the Red Desert. I went hunting for food this morning.
The gates were retract- that meant one Martian was still alive. U.A.S.A was wrong.. but then, they'd been wrong about a lot of other things too. I drew my pistol--
The stench of one Martian was never strong enough to make me sick.
KLINK
WHO'S THERE?
I aimed for his vest
As the monster thrashed its death throes, I gave in to nausea and vomited myself on the alien food-
3

But I almost
cracked when the
thing I was sent
said it was my name!
MATT
WHY?
It was Greg
OH GOD OH GOD
And with him
Aries II earths "Second
Chance" died too The
Planet had won.
I killed Greg but he wasn't
the last Martian.
Oh no! There's still
one more left
FOR RAY BRADBURY

Rino Munzi

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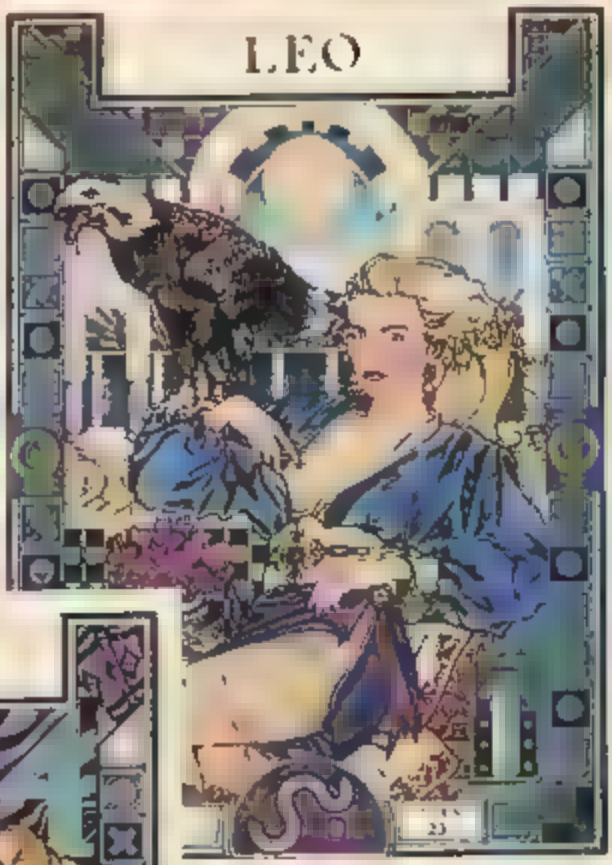

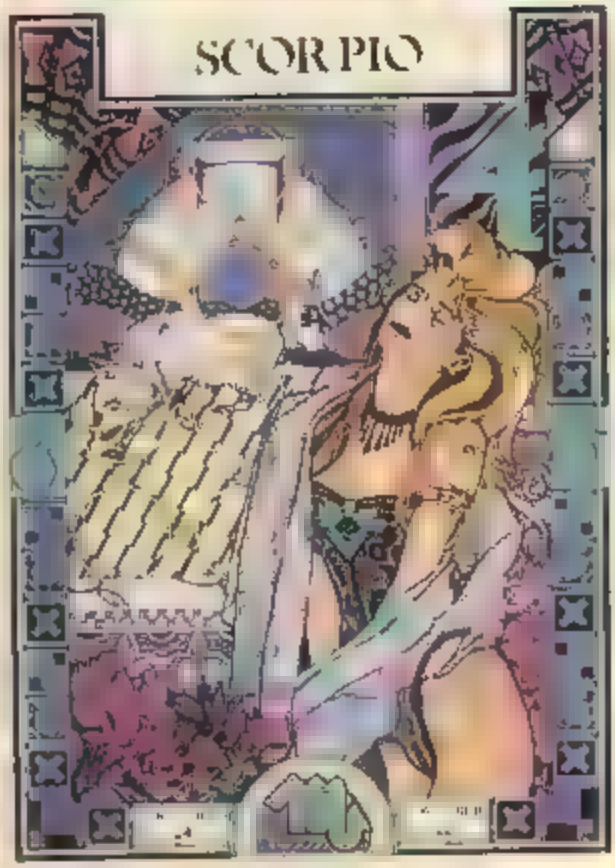

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CHOAK! GURGLE! GASP!s
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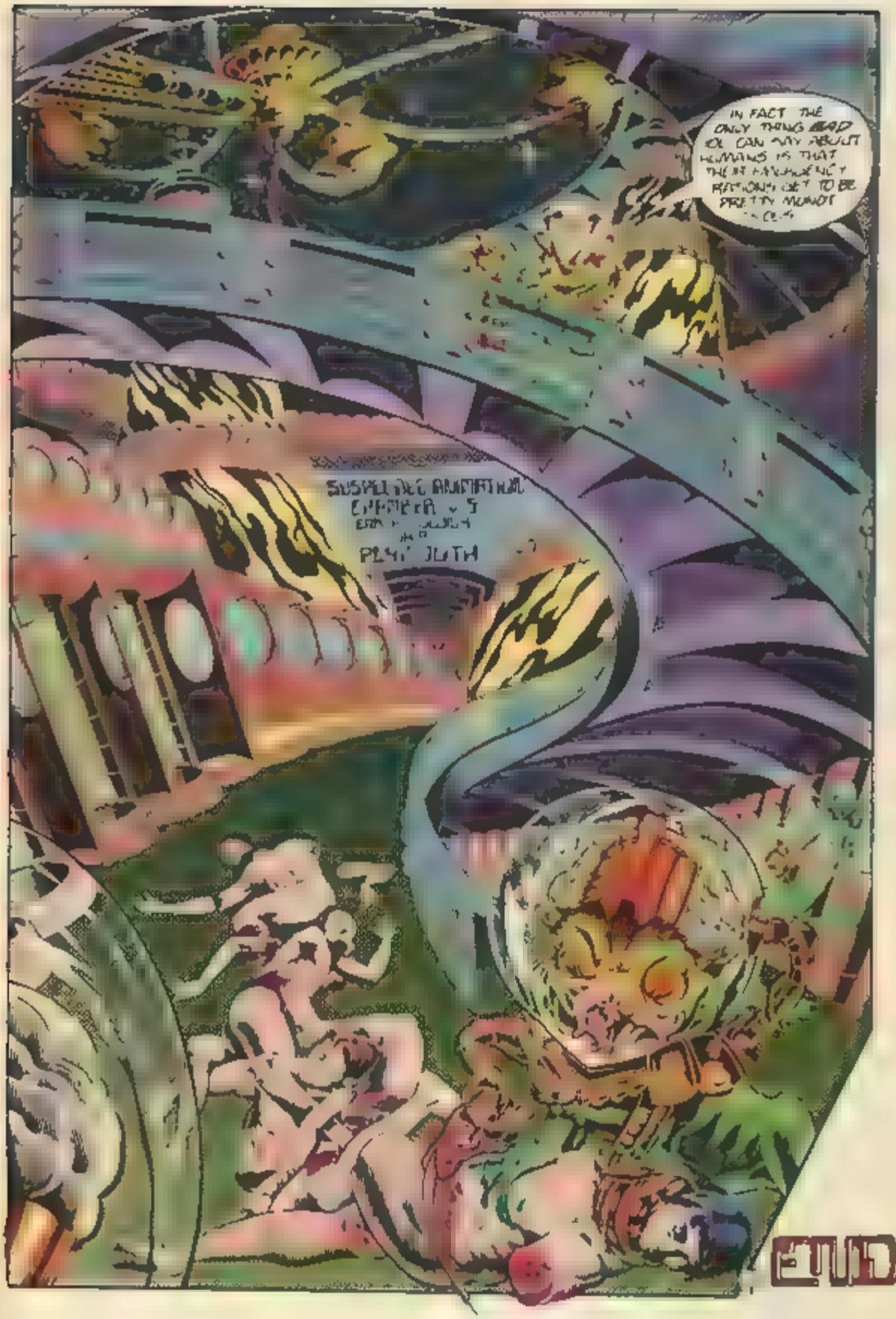
MOST OF OUR FUEL IS GONE OUR HULL IS PIERCED! HYDRO PONICS IS SMASHED!
WITHOUT FOOD AND AIR--WE'LL DIE
S-S-SIR? WILL WE EVER SEE HOME AGAIN?
SILENCE WE'RE NOT DEAD YET WE'LL FIND SOME WAY OUT OF THIS MESS!
I HOPE!
DON'T WORRY CADET! WE'LL BE HOME BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!
WE'D BETTER-- BECAUSE YOUR MOTHER THE QUEEN WILL SLAUGHTER MY FAMILY IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO YOU!

Story: Bill Dear Pencil: Nicolas Koenig Inks: Willie Blyden Letters: Carrie Spiegle Colors: Paul Wil

INK A MIRACLE A HUMAN MERCHANT RESCUE STATION
BLIP BLIP
AN ANCIENT AND BENEVOLENT RACE CADET
NO ONE HAS EVER MET A HUMAN BUT THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO THEY SCATTERED EMERGENCY BEACONS THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY
WE'VE JUST FINISHED TO REARM THIS ONE
THE HUMANS STOCK THE STATIONS WELL CADET
AMPLE ATOMIC POWER
SUPPLIES FOR TRADING GEAR REPAIR MATERIAL FUEL AIR
KEE!
ZZZZ
ZZZ
DI
LIQUID OXYGEN
EVIL MOOD
WHY DO THEY DO THIS?
NO ONE KNOWS WE SUSPECT THEY WERE A GREAT MORAL RACE, DEDICATED TO HELPING OTHERS
COME GET YOUR SUIT ON WE'LL SEE HOW THE OTHER HALF OF HUMANITY IS FARING IN THE FROZEN MEAT LOCKER


IN FACT THE ONLY THING BAD OL CAN SAY ABOUT HUMANS IS THAT THEIR HAIRLINES RECEDE TO BE PRETTY MUCH
PLAY' DUTH
THE END

Once upon a time in America there was a city called THE LIBRARY, a vast sprawling, monolithic labyrinth filled with the sum of human information and recorded experience
And in this mysterious metropolis of mundanity there was a girl Her name was Sindi Shade
One day she asked permission to check out a book
SINDI SHADE
TM
This SEPTEMBER in the pages of THE JOHNNY NEMO MAGAZINE

artificial gravity

Send your comments to: Eclipse Comics PO Box 199 Guerneville CA 95446

Dear catherine:

I've been looking forward to the first issue of *Alien Encounters* ever since it was announced as a replacement for *Alien Worlds*. Unfortunately, I was disappointed with this issue. Surely you guys (and gals) can do better than this.

The first story, "Pretending," was rather peculiar, and difficult to fully understand. The narrator, a peculiar birdlike creature, seemed to be talking to his planet as he revealed a scene from Earth (the last two people on Earth after an atomic holocaust?) on a funny TV. Since nothing is fully explained in this story, it is necessary to do a lot of guessing to figure out what the author intended. I guess this is supposed to be one of those "New-Wave" things which is purposely left vague so that lots of deep meanings can be read into it. I never much cared for this sort of thing.

The next story, "Open Season," seemed rather silly. It reminded me of the old Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck cartoons more than anything else, only the cartoons were more fun. (You know, where Elmer Fudd is shooting at Daffy Duck – when somebody announces that duck season is over and it is now rabbit season, he then turns and starts shooting at Bugs.) This doesn't really belong in a science fiction publication targeted for "mature readers." Or do you take that "mature" caption as only indicating that sex and violence are OK, rather than presuming that the readers would like less childish stories?

"Gorgonzo" was better. At least this story had ideas, although I disagree with the anti-capitalist theme of portraying businessmen as ruthless exploiters who oppress artistic freedom. Presumably you people at Eclipse Comics regard yourselves as different, even though you are presumably aiming at making a profit from your line of comics, which makes you capitalists also.

Finally, "Outcast" had a completely predictable "twist ending." The best I can say about it is that it at least only took up two pages. I've seen other SF comic stories in the past which took many pages to get to the "surprise ending" which any 12-year-old could guess from page one.

Despite this disappointing beginning, I hope you can improve in future issues. Science fiction has always been one of my favorite genres, and I'd like to see a good SF comic out there.

Sincerely,
Daniel Tobias
Pittsburgh PA

I'm sorry you consider "Open Season" childish, Daniel, but, I find your comparison confusing. The old Bugs Bunny cartoons were originally made to break up the tension of such 30's movies as "Scarface" or "Dead End." Certainly the audience was mature, and certainly they loved the cartoons, or they wouldn't have persisted to this day.

• • • •

Cat,

If you have many stories like "Pretending" in *Alien Encounters* in the future, I don't think the book will have much of a future. The art was good, but that was about it. As a college graduate with an English major, I'd be interested to know what percentage, if any, of your readership understood the story. I was one of the few who made it through "Thriller" and enjoyed it, but "Pretending" was agony. Criticism aside, I would appreciate it if someone could explain it to me. I'm sure Eric is a very good prose writer.

Marc Hempel's "Outcast" was nicely done.

"Open Season": Good art, clever dialogue, interesting story.

"Gorgonzo": Good story. Its message is one that has long frustrated me – movie remakes, and adapting prose characters into the movies by people who have no understanding for the story or characters. Examples are the Spider-Man, Captain America, and Red Sonja movies, to name just a few. The list is very long. Let's hope that Somerset Holmes is done right.

Dave Schollaert
Massillon OH

• • • •

Dear catherine,

I very much enjoyed the first issue of *Alien Encounters*, but the first thing the reader detects is the absence of Bruce Jones. Not that the new writers aren't great, it's just that anyone has to admit that Bruce Jones was one of the best (if not the best) writers in the field.

One great artist whose talent as a writer exceeds that of most writers is Berni Wrightson. I suggest you get him to write, and maybe draw a few stories for *Alien Encounters* and *Tales of Terror*. I would also suggest that you get writers and artists that Jones never had, like John Wagner and Brian Bolland (who used to do *Judge Dredd*).

In closing, I would like to say that the line-up you have is very good, and these are just suggestions to make it better.

Neil Ruffolo

I'm glad you like the line-up, Nell. We're always happy to take suggestions. Although there are no stories from Brian Bolland in the works yet for this book, I hope you caught his special "Brian Bolland's Black Book," on sale now—from Eclipse!

* * * *

Ms. yronwode,

I just finished reading *Alien Encounters* #1. To be honest, I was very disappointed. The cover by Joe Chiodo was superb and well in line with the Pacific level of quality that was evident in *Alien Worlds*. Beyond that, only one of the four stories, "Open Season," had excellent art, and it was more of a funny-animal space opera, or a "Bucky O'Hare" type of story (take your pick) than mature science fiction. I did enjoy it, unfortunately it wasn't science fiction and didn't belong in this title. The same line of reasoning can be applied closely to "Gorgonzo." This story was either a parody done of science fiction, giant robots, mad scientists, or horror movies (again, you choose. I can't). That's two stories right off the bat that were inappropriate for this title. "Pretending," as a story, did belong in the comic, but Mike Gustovich wouldn't be my choice to illustrate it. I am really worried about this title becoming an exclusive "in-house" production. People like John Bolton, Al Williamson, Scott and Bo Hampton, Jim Sullivan, etc., are needed at least periodically to make this title fly. The fourth story, "Outcast," was two wasted pages on poor art, and again shouldn't have been included.

I just caught a glimpse in *Eclipse Extra* #9 of the Peter Ledger cover for issue #2. It looks fantastic. Of all the Eclipse stable of artists, he genuinely should be chained to this title for interior work as well as covers for many issues.

Just before I go, I want you to know I will continue to buy *Alien Encounters*. The artists you select do not have to be all the big names I mentioned before, but a detailed illustrative approach (*a la* the great Wally Wood) is necessary.

Yours truly,
Michael Egan
Ottawa Ontario

As a matter of fact, Michael, we've been trying to get all of the artists you mentioned to do some work for us. For the most part, they've been too busy on other projects to accept, but we did get John Bolton to paint **two** *fantastic covers; one for this book and one for our flip side,* ***Tales of Terror.*** *Keep your eyes open. They'll be popping up soon!*

* * * *

Cat—

After my recent "encounter" with *Alien Encounters* #1, I felt compelled to drop you (and the other fine folks at Eclipse Comics) a line and let you know how impressed and appreciative I am of this new title.

Anyway, the main reason for my enjoyment of this debut issue was due largely to the way in which you managed to coordinate new, aspiring talents with more established pros. The end result was a quite satisfying potpourri of treats, both visual and mental, the likes of which are found only very rarely in the majority of today's titles.

Uncle Elvis
Denizen of the United States

P.S. Is *Artificial Gravity* the permanent letter-col title, or do we, the readers, get a shot at providing it with a name?

Artificial Gravity will remain the letters page title until we receive something better. So you start sending the suggestions, and we'll start reading them.

* * * *

Dear people,

Although the basic plot for "Pretending" was pretty good, several problems occurred in the production. The first three pages weren't comics at all, but rather a narrative with pictures. However, it was presented as comic. Perhaps Eric hoped the artwork would evoke interest in the characters, but if so it dismally failed (for me at least). The parrotmen were silly looking, and the whole beginning scenario reminded me of *Revenge of the Jedi's* Jabba the Hut/Muppets scene. The lovers were much better, though, in story and art. They were real-to-life, believable (a little trouble with dialogue), and fascinating. Don't feel the need to cover offensive parts for us (page 10, panel 1). Such protective ballooning looks unnatural. To Eric: I found Las'ak's speech to the planet to be pretty contrived. Also, I'm not sure if I understand the "Great Secret" or not, but your stressing its existence so much without giving me any assurance that I do understand only forms a barrier between me and what your characters are experiencing.

The high point of the issue was "Open Season." I think Ken Macklin is the best funny-animal writer around. Joe Chiodo's cover was also excellent, but didn't look as inspired as the covers of *Alien Worlds* did. "Gorgonzo" is barely worth mentioning. For a far better rendition of the "Outcast" idea, read "Shiny Beast" in *Epic Illustrated* #8. Even in two-page stories, it is rare for a twist ending to carry the story successfully.

As for your editorial, does anyone remember the short-lived *Pathways to Fantasy*? I liked its single issue (and what you later put in *Alien Worlds* #9) far better than any other *Alien Worlds* or *Twisted Tales* issue.

You new magazine is off to a not-too-bad start, and I'll continue buying for a while, at least.

Chris Brown
Detroit MI

P.S. For the as-yet-unannounced letters-page-naming contest, how about *Native Response*? Okay, what'd I win? The original Chiodo cover?

Native Response. Not bad. Do I hear a second?

* * * *

The outside of next issue sports a wonderful cover by British artist Mick Austin. The inside contains an epic battle against one woman—"The Heroine," by James Brock, Jr. Also, a man alone in space with nothing but a nagging computer to keep him company—"M.O.T.H.E.R. Knows Best," by Buzz Dixon and Larry Elmore. And don't miss *Tales of Terror* #2, which features the triumphant return of an artist who hasn't worked in comics since before the Code!

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